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Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Statement for the Record
H.R. 1262 Water Quality Investment Act
March 12, 2009

Ms. McCOLLUM: Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for the *Water Quality Investment Act of 2009*. I thank Chairman Oberstar and the House leadership for their hard work on this timely legislation, which will modernize our nation's wastewater infrastructure to ensure our water supply is clean and safe for America's children and families.

A growing economy and population over the past decades have stretched the availability and compromised the quality of America's water supply. Our country has outgrown the capacity of our wastewater systems. Sewage overflows and toxic spillage are contaminating our water supply and posing grave threats to human health and the health of our water ecosystems.

By authorizing \$13.8 billion in federal grants for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and \$1.8 billion for sewer overflow control grants over the next five years, the *Water Quality Investment Act* will put 480,000 Americans to work and help bridge the gap between the number of wastewater infrastructure projects that need assistance and the amount of funding available. Over the next five years, Minnesota will receive over \$250 million to modernize its water systems, thereby helping to protect and restore the more than 10,000 lakes that help define our state.

This legislation also takes bold steps to clean up the Great Lakes, one of the nation's greatest natural resources. The Great Lakes make up the largest system of fresh, surface water on Earth, providing 90 percent of America's fresh surface water and 18 percent of the world's fresh water supply. In 2006 alone, over 23 billion gallons of sewage entered the Great Lakes due to failing wastewater systems. This threatens human health and compromises the environmental integrity of these precious water bodies. This legislation authorizes \$750 million over five years for the *Great Lakes Legacy Act*, which supports projects to restore and protect the water quality of the Great Lakes.

Water is a scarce, precious resource and we must use it with great care. By passing the *Water Quality Investment Act*, Congress is working to ensure that our water can remain clean and safe for generations to come. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.